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ABSTRACT

This global literature review examines 47 refereed journal articles dealing with the initial and ongoing professional development of teachers during 1987-1997. Professional development is defined as a self-actualized, self-motivated, proactive approach to teacher education that centers on the growth of teachers in affective, collaborative, and cognitive dimensions. The literature search includes a large number of descriptors related to preservice and inservice education cross-referenced with global perspectives in education. The review identifies five factors that affect engagement in professional development opportunities: political issues, time issues, adult learner issues, collegial and reflective issues, and initial preparation issues. Five programs, four in the United States and one in South Africa, are examined in greater depth. Though buoyed by the variety of professional development programs available globally, the researchers are dismayed that the emphasis in the reviewed articles rests on factors that impede professional development. (Contains 59 references.) (Author/SM)

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Examining Educators' Professional Development:

A Global Perspective on Issues and Practices

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Abstract

This global literature review examines 47 refereed journal articles dealing with the initial and ongoing professional development of teachers during 1987-1997. Professional development is defined as a self-actualized, self-motivated, proactive approach to teacher education that centers on the growth of teachers in affective, collaborative, and cognitive dimensions. The literature search includes a large number of descriptors related to preservice and inservice education cross-referenced with global perspectives in education. The review identifies 5 factors that affect engagement in professional development opportunities: political issues, time issues, adult learner issues, collegial and reflective issues, and initial preparation issues. Five interesting programs, 4 in the USA and 1 in South Africa, are examined in greater depth. Though buoyed by the variety of professional development programs available globally, the researchers are dismayed that the emphasis in the reviewed articles rests on factors that impede professional development.

Examining Educators' Professional Development:

A Global Perspective on Issues and Practices

The need for good teacher preparation, both initial and ongoing, crosses cultural, political, and national boundaries. Indian educators Joshi and Thomas (1991) remark, "A system of education cannot rise above the level of its teachers" (p. 11). Liang (1991), a Taiwanese educator, calls for the protection of society from intellectually mediocre teachers. Sander (1995) laments the fact that the quality of initial German teacher education has "sharply decreased" (p. 103) in the last two decades. In his view, much of the responsibility for good quality teaching now resides in "on-the-job" training and inservice education. Preservice education alone cannot equip a teacher for a lifetime of practice in the profession (Cushing, Sabers, & Berliner, 1995; Joshi & Thomas, 1991). Professional development is becoming a part of many teachers' working life (Day, 1993).

Our road of inquiry into teachers' professional development has taken a circuitous and circular route. As we worked with preservice and inservice teachers, we began looking for ways to entice our students and colleagues into thinking about their continued learning options as they pursued a teaching career. Our interest centered on the continuous professional development of the teacher in affective, collaborative, and cognitive dimensions (Bell & Gilbert, 1994). We worked with individual teachers and students using reading and writing as vehicles for inquiry into practice and for development of a personal educational theory on which to base instruction (Graves, 1994; Meyer, 1993). We investigated a variety of experiences, such as perusal of various literature forms, professional, children's and young adult; attendance at and participation in professional conferences; opportunities to participate in action research; and occasions

to publish individually and jointly with us (McWhorter & Bullion-Mears, 1997). We attempted to educate our students about the various modes of professional development. Then, we began to think globally and decided to examine the literature on teacher preparation from various national perspectives, looking for issues and interesting programs.

Definition of Terms

For this study, we have differentiated between professional development and traditional staff development and/or inservice education. We view professional development as a self-actualized, self-motivated, proactive approach to initial and ongoing teacher education. Control of topics and methods tends to be local and personal. Teachers seek solutions to perceived problems or investigate areas related to their own instruction. This type of professional development requires knowledge and trust by teachers, instructional leaders, administrators, and university representatives. In this paradigm, preparatory teacher education must emphasize collaboration, risk-taking, and responsible decision-making within a supervised framework so future teachers can continue their own personal, social, and professional growth once they are teachers of record.

Glatthorn (1995) defines staff development as "all formal and informal programs that are offered to groups of teachers in response to organizational need. Formal staff development programs have specific agendas, a set schedule, and a structured set of experiences" (p. 288). Traditional staff development customarily operates from a deficit model. Teachers are viewed as less than competent providers of learning experiences, and inservice education is viewed as the remedy for the problem (Arin-Krupp, 1989).

Program designers emphasize generic, large group presentations (Bertani & Tafel, 1989), highlighting quick-fix techniques and strategies. This paradigm tends to decontextualize inservice education and weaken its usefulness (Eisner, 1995) and assumes that theory can be easily and directly translated into practice (Glatthorn, 1995).

Method

Formulating the research review consisted of several steps. We established our criteria for information selection. Our goal was to be current; thus we limited our search to the last 10 years. In addition, we focused on articles published in refereed journals written in English. Initial descriptors included teachers' professional development, inservice education, and preservice education. The descriptor professional development yielded few selections and these mainly addressed professional development centers attached to university teacher preparatory programs in the United States. Reading the major and minor descriptors listed in the abstracts from the articles of the first search helped us broaden our search. The descriptors of teacher knowledge, teacher education, teacher training, teaching quality, staff development, student teachers, and beginning teachers were added. Then to look across countries, the descriptors of global perspectives in education, global education, and foreign countries were cross-referenced with the descriptors associated with teaching.

After reading abstracts, we found 67 articles that were within the time frame we were interested in and either concerned preservice or inservice education. Closer reading of the abstracts and articles resulted in eliminating 14 sources. Teachers' development associated with technology articles were not used because we felt that topic was beyond the scope of this review. We also eliminated articles that focused primarily on reviews of

studies and on program development without addressing the training of teachers. After a closer reading of the 53 articles we had acquired through inter-library loan and from our own library, we eliminated 6 more articles. As a result of our search and elimination process, 47 articles were used in the analysis. (See Bibliography for a complete listing of reviewed articles.) We then divided the articles into two categories, those that focused predominantly on initial teacher preparation and those that focused on ongoing teacher development. These articles revealed several factors that affect engagement in professional development activities and an array of programs involving initial preparation and ongoing teacher education.

Factors Affecting Engagement in Professional Development

Teachers' professional development does not occur in a vacuum. The learning context needs organizational support that is conducive to teachers attempting new ideas as they work with students (Loucks-Horsley, 1995) and engage in systematic instructional change (Washington, 1993). Rapid changes in student populations (Kremer-Hayon, 1991), the continuous development of new information about teaching and learning (Smylie & Conyers, 1991), and the need for accountability and reform serve as the background for a renewed vision of teachers' initial and ongoing preparation. Our review of the literature revealed the following major issues affecting teachers' engagement in professional development activities.

Political Issues

In our naiveté, we were focused on individual teachers and failed to take into account global factors that affect professional development. The literature quickly brought to our attention political issues which operate at school, district, municipal, state

or regional, national, and global levels that may not directly relate to professional development but constrain individuals' capacities to engage in these opportunities (Bowman, Ellis, Smart, & Wiens, 1994; Brown & Fairley, 1993; Freeland, 1996; Sander, 1995; Smith, 1991-1992). These factors include the impetus towards a worldwide interrelated character versus the development of a national identity (Gottlieb, 1991; Joshi & Thomas, 1991) and the conflict between regional, ethnic, tribal, and religious identities and the development of a national identity (Freeland, 1996).

These larger political factors lead to issues more directly related to teaching such as lack of employment opportunities (Karagozoglu. 1991; Sander. 1995; Shiina & Chonan, 1993), low compensation (Karagozoglu, 1991; Smith, 1991-1992), lack of adequate preparation at all levels in educational systems (Anisimov, 1991; Karagozoglu, 1991; Moseley, 1994; Sander, 1995; Smith, 1991-1992; Starida, 1995), and the view of teachers as technicians instead of professionals (Bowman et al, 1994; Penny & Harley, 1995). Political factors also influence the budgetary support available for ongoing professional development (Esu, 1991) and the monies appropriated for supplies and materials (Jones, 1995).

Time Issues

Change is difficult (Wood & Thompson, 1995) and requires systematic support in the form of resources and time (Esu, 1991). Moving from replication of transmitted knowledge to reflection on constructed knowledge is a time consuming process (Smylie & Conyers, 1991). Extended time is required to integrate new instructional strategies into teachers' existing thought patterns and instructional frameworks (Philips & Glickman, 1991). Adequate time allows for continuity in the professional development setting by

providing teachers with opportunities to study, read, write, and reflect (Newman, 1996), to work and reach decisions together (Phillips & Glickman, 1991), and to initiate discussions of teaching and learning between veteran and novice teachers (Newman, 1996). Esu (1991) and Inglis, Ballantine, Hepburn, and Riddell (1993) point out that time for professional development needs to be embedded in teachers' regular schedules rather than using teachers' leisure time during evenings or weekends.

Adult Learner Issues

All learners need supportive, positive, growth oriented environments in order to maximize learning potential. As adult learners, teachers possess unique learning characteristics. They commit to learning when goals are realistic and relevant to their current needs. They prefer to control the origin and development of their own learning. Resentment can build when adult learners receive direction in areas in which they feel self-motivated. Adult learners define their own ideas of excellence. They seek support rather than judgment from their peers. They look for results from their efforts and respond well to continuous follow-up support (Arin-Krupp, 1989; Wood & Thompson, 1993).

Past experience creates a base that assimilates new knowledge for adult learners. These past experiences are unique to each individual; therefore, teachers have different learning needs in terms of their age and level of experience (Lieberman & Miller, 1992). Adults experience different developmental tasks as they pass through different life stages. Professional development activities that are relevant and meaningful to a twenty-four year old may need to modified and adapted for use with a forty-four year old (Arin-Krupp, 1989). Adults also experience differing levels of expertise on various issues, so a

teacher may be at one level of expertise on behavioral issues and a different level in terms of curriculum development (Lieberman & Miller, 1992). Because teachers mainly interact with children and young adults during their professional lives, they may need assistance as they begin adult conversations. As Newman (1996) discovered, teachers may need coaching in adult level management skills such as holding individuals accountable for group expectations.

Collegial and Reflective Issues

Teachers' knowledge, skills, and expertise must be viewed as assets (Smylie & Conyer, 1991). Fredericks (1987) points to an untapped reservoir of teacher expertise and skill that receives little regard from administrators and other teachers within the system or from university professionals delivering traditional inservice training. Leino's (1995) study of Finnish classroom teachers indicates teachers can be creative and they will work to achieve reflectivity as they engage in program planning. Schön (1987) argues that teachers construct knowledge from their practice rather than applying it. Reflection allows teachers to explore their personal, idiosyncratic beliefs about educational theory as well as giving them opportunities to apply and adapt ideas from research (Evertson, 1987). Day (1993) points out that teachers' comfort level and the atmosphere of the school are influential in allowing for advice giving and the sharing of techniques and materials.

Even in self-directed programs that address the concerns of individual teachers, learning can be collaborative. Conversation with other teachers about the nature of students, learning, and teaching creates a climate for collaboration (Arimoto, 1995) and helps entrench new learning (Rehorick & Edwards, 1995). Permanent discussion groups

such as those Leino (1995) encountered or book/study groups are viable avenues for collaborative learning. Participation in book/study groups allows teachers to be self-directed in learning and reflecting, encourages synthesis of theory and practice, and establishes a common language for those involved (Schmale, 1994). Serving as research partners, whether with other teachers or with university staff, is also an outlet for reflection and collaboration. Schoenbach (1994) describes teachers as research partners who investigate the school's ongoing professional development impact on students' learning. This opportunity for systematic investigation into classroom learning and for contributing to the team's data pool combines the elements of reflective practice and collaboration.

Initial Preparation Issues

Bradley (1995) points out that " . . . no profession or professional organization outside of education is actually talking about less training for its initiates" (p. 180). Yet in Canada and the United States there have recently been discussions about removing teacher training from the university and using instead an apprenticeship or intern type of program. This review has consistently found a call across the globe for more and better preservice training (Anisimov, 1991; Bowman et al, 1994; Bradley, 1995; Sander, 1995). This call mentions the following elements: an appropriate combination of theory and practical school application; an increase in the amount of time preservice teachers spend in elementary and secondary classrooms; the paramountcy of quality modeling of instruction by tenured faculty, seconded practitioners, and sponsor teachers; and increased time for reflection on practice, theory, and prior experience (Bowman et al, 1994; Bradley, 1995; Joshi & Thomas, 1991; Sander, 1995). In some countries,

prospective teachers have difficulty staying in school long enough to become certified teachers, so many are getting their training as they teach which often leads to divided loyalties (McKenna & MacLarty, 1987).

Interesting Programs

Enticing teachers, administrators, and other school personnel to engage in professional development opportunities involves acknowledging the importance of individual choice, providing time for reflection and engagement with colleagues, and maintaining a supportive environment conducive to risk-taking and problem solving. It is impossible to choose one program or approach to professional development that fits all contexts or all learners (Arin-Krupp, 1989). The following sections describe aspects of various approaches to professional development in both preservice and inservice education that have been found effective

Initial Preparation of Teachers

Western Michigan University/Kalamazoo Public School Collaboration. In this initiative, fifteen preservice teachers interacted with second grade students and their teacher in an ongoing collaborative approach that focused on developing an integrated thematic unit. The experience involved two components. The university course component met weekly and concentrated on group work to plan, implement, and evaluate the unit; on discussions linking students' previous experiences and class readings with field observations; and on information highlighting effective instructional practices provided by the classroom teacher. During this phase, the preservice teachers became knowledgeable about theory underlying thematic instruction and the process of unit design and development.

The field component consisted of a 10 week pre-assessment phase, a 3 week instructional phase, and a 2 week evaluative phase. During pre-assessment, the preservice teachers determined the elementary students' prior knowledge and interest related to topics, considered various learning styles, and used a variety of questioning methods. This phase also involved group reflections and discussions to fine-tune questions and plan the thematic unit. Once the preservice teachers had completed profiles of the elementary students, then outcomes and activities were constructed to fit students' needs and meet instructional goals. During the instructional phase, preservice teachers implemented their unit. The classroom teacher served as facilitator. The 20 required contact hours were staggered, so preservice teachers were on site during most of the school day. In the final phase, preservice teachers in concert with the university instructor and classroom teacher evaluated their instructional unit, the elementary students' engagement, and the process associated with the collaborative endeavor (Dynak & Gagliano, 1994).

Community Placement Programme (CPP). This South African post-graduate teacher training program provided a unique experience by placing preservice teachers into commercial, industrial, and social/educational enterprises. The goal of this two week placement was to enable future teachers to gain a better awareness of career choices open to the students they plan to teach and to provide a forum for acquiring better understanding of the relationship between schools and communities. The preservice teachers were placed with industrial, manufacturing, and distributive organizations or with social/educational enterprises and services, such as taping for the blind or a career advisory service. At the completion of their placement, preservice teachers shared their

thoughts through open-ended questionnaires and interviews. Several themes emerged. Preservice teachers indicted they gained a better understanding of the technical aspects, including the size, complexity, and structure, of various jobs. An awareness of social change, including unionization issues and effects of technological change, and a greater appreciation of the world of work were also apparent. The importance of communication between different interest groups led students to recognize the importance of literacy and English oral language skills. Participants in CPP also revealed a greater awareness of their own personal values regarding their career choices (Penny & Harley, 1995).

Inservice Education

Santa Cruz County New Teacher Project. In 1988, the University of California at Santa Cruz, the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, and seven school districts joined forces to initiate a program in which veteran teachers would mentor beginning teachers. A key component of this initiative was a yearlong collegial relationship pairing a veteran teacher, released from regular classroom activities, with 13 new teachers as they progressed through their first year of classroom instruction. Mentors met weekly with individual new teachers for two hours at a mutually agreeable time. As new teachers experienced the various stages associated with first year teaching, veteran teachers provided aid where needed. For example, during the survival stage, veteran teachers provided resources and curricular ideas, taught demonstration lessons, and helped in the assimilation of the myriad of information that abounds in a school context. As the year progressed, first year teachers and veteran teachers broadened their engagements to include more reflective conversations. A weekly ongoing dialogue was encouraged through the use of an interactive journal. Veteran teachers also encouraged novices to

pursue answers to educational questions through personal inquiry (Moir & Stobbe, 1995).

The Teacher Training Institute. Devised and implemented by the staff of a single elementary school, the Teacher Training Institute (Catasauqua Area School District, Pennsylvania, USA) was based on the everyday concerns of teachers, immediate applicability in the classroom, and the use of collegial expertise. The crux of the program involved teachers training other teachers. During each inservice day, session leaders would schedule three to five different classes on topics of interest. Teachers attended the session they preferred. Session leaders were responsible for the design and development of the content and methods presented during their session. Some sessions were scheduled over several inservice days. As teachers encountered difficulties throughout the school year, session leaders were available to assist with follow-up discussions and problem solving.

The program required minimal financial support because it was staffed and operated by regular school personnel. Shared responsibility by teachers, support staff, and administrators for design and implementation aided in establishing a workable and flexible system. Principals and district personnel provided support in time and scheduling, so teachers could have uninterrupted time to work, learn, and think. The program was deemed successful and was expanded to other schools in the district (Fredericks, 1987).

The Humanities Education, Research, and Language Development (HERALD) Project. The mission of the HERALD project of the San Francisco Unified School District and the San Francisco Education Fund was to improve high school students' oral and written English language skills across the curriculum. At ten school sites,

interdisciplinary teams met weekly during a common preparation period to discuss classroom innovations promoting oral and written communication. Each school team created learning opportunities unique to the skills of their teachers and the particular needs of their student body. One school focused on developing and implementing an interdisciplinary unit while another sharpened oral presentation skills. At the district level, summer institutes and retreats throughout the year allowed teachers to work with researchers, artists, other teachers, community members, and students on new strategies and perspectives.

Teacher reflection was a key component of the initiative. Teachers were encouraged to step back from everyday classroom life and think about what was happening in their classrooms. Teachers used reading and writing to generate their individual professional knowledge. Ongoing support was provided from the Project's director and associate director through on-site visits and the provision of extra resources which increased teachers' funds of knowledge.

Analysis of standardized measures of learning of students enrolled in HERALD project classrooms indicated they grew in their oral language, in their abilities to participate in class, and in their willingness to speak in front of an audience. HERALD teachers, when compared to non-HERALD peers, gave more assignments that involved writing, group projects, and oral presentations. HERALD teachers used a greater variety of diverse materials and modes. Participation in HERALD also improved teachers' sense of efficacy, professional self-respect, and their reengagement in teaching (Schoenbach, 1994).

Conclusions

According to Fredericks (1987), the goal of professional development is increased instructional effectiveness. Implicit in this goal is the assumption that increased effectiveness will translate into improved student achievement and attitudes. Bell and Gilbert (1994) add that another goal of professional development is an increased sense of self-efficacy; teachers want to feel "better about themselves as teachers" (p. 495). The literature of the last 10 years delineates what creates effective professional development opportunities. Vacca (1994) recommends hands-on activities related to teaching and learning, encouraging reflective responses, engaging in collaborative partnerships, and extending development over time.

Our review of the literature did locate examples of effective professional development opportunities during initial preparation and inservice education. These examples, varied in format, content, goals, and design, are not perfect, but each attempts to improve learner outcomes and to meet the affective, collaborative, and cognitive needs of teachers. Professional development programs need to come in different forms because teachers and learners present an infinite variety of needs and learning styles.

The overall outlook, however, is bleak because the literature is more concerned with issues that impede professional development opportunities than with examining effective programs. Global, national, and local political factors; lack of time and resources; inattention to the needs of adult learners, particularly those who deal with children for a large portion of the day; and lack of appreciation for the expertise that teachers bring to any learning situation are some of the problems that face teachers and administrators as they develop and participate in professional development opportunities.

Teachers need to be proactive in identifying areas of need and pursuing answers to questions. Continuous professional development must be woven into the fabric of daily teaching.

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